



EAST ALABAMA

REGIONAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

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Albertha F. (Bert) Grant
Executive Director

December 17, 2015

Ms. Barbara Alfano
Atlanta Federal Center
61 Forsythe Street, S. W. 10th FL.
Atlanta GA, 30303-8960

Re: Transmittal of EPA Assessment Grant Application

Dear Ms. Alfano:

Please accept our proposal to the 2016 Brownfields Assessment Grant program.

- a) Applicant Identification: East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission
P.O. Box 2186
Anniston, AL 36202-2186
- b) Applicant DUNS number: 094484888
- c) Funding Requested
 - i) Grant Type: Assessment
 - ii) Federal Funds Requested: \$400,000 No waiver is being requested
 - iii) Contamination: Hazardous Substances (\$200,000) and Petroleum (\$200,000)
 - iv) Community-wide
- d) Location: The East Alabama Region consisting of ten counties: Calhoun, Chambers, Cherokee, Cleburne, Clay, Coosa, Etowah, Randolph, Talladega, and Tallapoosa.
- e) This is not a site-specific proposal
- f) Contacts:
 - i) Project Director: Donna Fathke, Principal Planner
Phone/Fax: (256)-237-6741 / (256)237-6763
E-mail: donna.fathke@earpdc.org
Address: P.O. Box 2186
Anniston, AL 36202-2186



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Probate Judge, Cherokee County

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ALBERTA McCRORY
Mayor, Town of Hobson

Calhoun Chambers Cherokee Clay Cleburne Coosa Etowah Randolph Talladega Tallapoosa



ii) Chief Executive: Ms. Albertha Grant, Executive Director

Phone/Fax: (256)-237-6741 / (256)237-6763

E-mail: albertha.grant@earpdc.org

Address: P.O. Box 2186

Anniston, AL 36202-2186


g) Date Submitted: Dec. 17, 2015

h) Project Period: The proposed project period is 3 years.

i) Please see the Regional Priorities/Other Factors Checklist in Appendix 3.

Thank you for your considerations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Albertha F. Grant". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Albertha F. Grant
Executive Director

1. Community Need

1.a. Targeted Community and Brownfields

1.a.i. Targeted Community Description: The East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission serves a ten county area containing the counties of Calhoun, Chambers, Cherokee, Clay, Cleburne, Coosa, Etowah, Randolph, Talladega and Tallapoosa. These counties form a generally triangular region sandwiched between the Alabama/Georgia state line on the east and the Coosa River on the west. These counties are composed of 5,552.63 square miles of land area and 152.35 square miles of surface water area. According to the 2010 Census, there are 470,469 people who reside in the ten counties that make up the East Alabama Region. This number of residents accounts for 10% of the State of Alabama's population.

East Alabama is a primarily rural area, dotted with small cities and towns throughout the 10 county region with 57 incorporated municipalities within. Although there are two Metropolitan Planning Organizations within the region, Calhoun/Anniston and Etowah Gadsden MPO's, the majority of the incorporated cities and towns (43) are all considered rural towns. Nearly half of the incorporated communities have populations of less than 1,000, and another quarter have only 1,000 to 5,000 residents. Only six cities in the ten county region have more than 10,000 inhabitants. These small towns experience difficulties in funding, administration, attracting new business and residents, and recovering from economic downturns. Most mayors are not full-time city employees, but instead hold full-time jobs while they act as mayor. Only our 2 largest cities have planning staff. The rest are dependent on outside sources of funding and expertise to carry out projects such as environmental assessments and clean-ups.

Not only are the towns and communities small, but the region's businesses are also small. In 2012, 86.8% of the businesses in the region employed less than 20 people. In the region and across Alabama, less than 1% of all businesses have over 250 employees. According to the 2014 CEDS, the East Alabama region is home to approximately 8,000 businesses, which employ over 116,000 people. As would be anticipated, most of these businesses are located in the three counties that have the most people: Calhoun, Etowah and Talladega Counties. In fact, the distribution of businesses throughout the region strongly correlates with the distribution of people throughout the region. Nearly two-thirds of the regions residents (64.9%) live in Calhoun, Etowah and Talladega Counties, and just over two-thirds of the regions businesses (69.5%) have located in these three counties.

While this proposed project will include or be open to all of the counties and municipalities within the region, the project will align with the regional priority of EPA Region 4: Assistance to communities that have limited in-house capacity to manage brownfields projects, by targeting the smaller, rural and sometimes isolated communities within the region. These communities by far have fewer resources with which to operate and remain viable.

1.a.ii. Demographic Information: As of 2010, the population of the East Alabama region was 470,469 persons, which is a 2 percent increase from 2000. According to the ACS 2014 5 Year Estimates, the region has experienced a population loss of 3,478 persons (.7%). The Table 1 below describes the existing population composition of the region. Diversity throughout the region is lacking compared to the State of Alabama and the Nation as a whole. The region's population is composed of 74.87% white, 22.14% African American, and other races make up 2.99% of the population. The State of Alabama has a population of 4,817,678 composed from 69.08% white, 26.36% African American and 4.56% other races.

Table 1: Existing Population Composition of the Region

County	2010 Total Population	2014 ACS 5 YR Estimated Population	White*	African American*	Other Race*	Hispanic*	Disabled*	Over Age 65*
Calhoun	118574	117186	88125	24396	4665	4017	29587	17820
Chambers	34215	34091	19771	13722	598	158	6701	6041
Cherokee	25989	26042	24207	1283	552	375	5565	5004
Clay	13932	13617	11150	1986	481	424	2603	2487
Cleburne	14972	14990	14095	430	465	331	2954	2603
Coosa	11539	11247	7549	3524	174	238	2268	1956
Etowah	104430	104126	84904	16000	3222	3669	18560	17165
Randolph	22913	22724	17491	4555	678	658	4031	4129
Talladega	82291	81673	53259	26046	2368	1742	15235	12284
Tallapoosa	41616	41295	29076	11457	762	1036	7248	7560
Total	470469	466991	349627	103399	13965	12648	94762	77049

*data from 2014 ACS 5 YR Estimate

While the state contains more diversity than the region, it lags behind the nation whose total population is 314,107,084 and composed of: White 73.81%, African American 12.60%, and other races equaling 13.59%.

The table below provides additional pertinent demographic information for our region.

	Population	Percent Minority	Individuals and % with No Health Insurance Coverage	Mean Travel Time to Work (minutes)	Unemployment Rate	Median Household Income	Poverty Rate (%)
Calhoun	117186	24.80%	8823.4%	22.9	13.5	\$40,919	21.7
Chambers	34091	42.00%	314.42%	25.2	12.7	\$32,835	23.9
Cherokee	26042	6.93%	264.5%	26.7	9.6	\$34,983	21
Clay	13617	18.12%	180.6%	29.34	10.9	\$35,286	18.7
Cleburne	14990	5.97%	160.45%	33	8.6	\$37,008	18.1
Coosa	11247	32.88%	65.3%	28.3	19.9	\$32,340	20
Etowah	104126	18.46%	1298.56%	23.8	10.7	\$38,467	19.6
Randolph	22724	23.03%	1963.8%	27.6	11.4	\$36,498	23.5
Talladega	81673	34.79%	4552.5%	24	14.9	\$35,896	23.4
Tallapoosa	41295	25.59%	409.45%	24.4	10.3	\$38,644	21.1
Alabama	4817678	30.92%	51606.46%	24.3	10.2	\$43,511	18.9
US	314107084	26.19%	521740557.1%	25.7	9.2	\$53,482	15.6

1.a.iii. Description of Brownfields: Potential Brownfield sites within the Region that are of concern to the residents, community leaders and economic developers and contained in the known

inventory of sites that may be recommended for assessment include: dry cleaners, salvage yards, paint and body shops, automotive repair shops, fueling operations, storage yards, and landfills among other various sites. An example of suspected brownfield sites within the region are:

Avondale Mill: abandoned buildings associated with textile manufacturing. Possible contaminants are metals and chlorinated solvents.

Randolph Medical Center: abandoned medical facility. Possible contaminants are gasoline, other petroleum products. There is current interest in redeveloping the property into a business incubator. This property is along the railroad and has great potential for industrial development.

Gadsden Industrial Park: former steel plant, now abandoned. Potential contaminants include arsenic, lead, PAHs polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs). There is current interest in redeveloping the property.

Abandoned storefront Roanoke, AL: former storefront previously used as pet shop, hardware store, funeral parlor, and furniture manufacturer. Potential contaminants include ammonia, petroleum products, wood finishes and metals. Current interest by the Chamber of Commerce and city to develop this property into a downtown pocket park.

This is but a small sampling of the inventory of potential brownfield sites throughout the region. It is expected that once the project is funded and the education and outreach component of the project is activated, this inventory will grow exponentially.

1.a.iv. Cumulative Environmental Issues: According to the EPA there are 132 reported toxic release sites throughout our ten-county region (echo.epa.gov). The releases include metals, solvents, and other hazardous materials. Additionally, according to the Alabama Department of Environmental Management, many enforcement orders were issued throughout the region. A sampling of these orders follows:

Entity	Issue Date	Fine	Order Number
Anniston Army Depot	08/12/15	\$12,750.00	15-084-CHW (Hazardous Waste)
Attalla Utilities	06/25/15	\$10,400.00	15-068-CWP (Surface Water Discharge)
Center for Domestic Preparedness	05/15/15	\$47,625.00	15-066-CHW (Hazardous Waste)
Cargill, Incorporated	04/10/15	\$30,000.00	15-055-CWP (Surface Water Discharge)
Rainbow City Utilities	03/16/15	\$0.00	15-053-CWP (Surface Water Discharge)

Between the private industry releases and the municipal and Federal toxic releases and violations, the environment throughout the region takes a brutal beating. Air quality within the region is generally fair however, it is of some concern throughout the region. Toxic air pollutants, or air toxics, are those pollutants known or suspected of causing cancer or other serious health problems, such as birth defects. Cancer risk is expressed as a number in a million, e.g., 16 in a million chance of getting cancer due to air pollution. The following table describes overall risk of cancer (from inhalation) from the 2005 National Scale Air Toxics Assessment (NATA). For the counties in the proposed project, the primary source category of risk is from secondary ambient concentration of formaldehyde, acetaldehyde and acrolein.

2005 Toxic Air Pollutants Cancer Risk Estimate: Total Risk per Million

Calhoun	Chambers	Cherokee	Clay	Cleburne	Coosa	Etowah	Randolph	Talladega	Tallapoosa
56	42	40	37	40	39	49	38	49	40

1.b. Impacts on Targeted Community: The table below delineates disease mortality and incidence rates as well as other health indicators for the region compared to the State and the Nation. The region has significantly elevated cancer mortality and incidence rates. Several Counties show heightened cancer incidence rates for five different cancer sites, and the regions *overall rate* of cancer incidence is .7% lower than the State and 7% lower than the Nation. The regions *mortality rate* for cancer is 19.5% higher than the State and 38% higher than the Nation. Additionally, our residents report more poor physical health days than the average Alabama and US residents.

Disease Mortality Incidence Rates (Deaths per 100,000 population/year)								
	Cancer Mortality Rate*	Cancer Incidence Rate All Sites*	Colon Cancer Rate	Lung Cancer Rate	Oral Cancer Rate	Melanoma Rate	Poor Physical Health Days***	Premature Death***
Calhoun	222.7	468	88	51.3	16.2	18.7	5.2	10539
Chambers	243	496.4	80.5	48.8	16.6	15.9	5	11864
Cherokee	328.2	437.3	80	39.4	11.9	12.4	6.1	10513
Clay	148.3	500.2	91.9	48.7	12.2	23.9	6	8959
Cleburne	320.1	433	71.8	55	16.7	13.6	5.9	10438
Coosa	266.1	442.9	79.3	44.7	<15	16.8	4	12160
Etowah	265.6	469	81.2	47.1	14.5	19.7	4.5	11057
Randolph	250.8	427.3	64.7	46	10.2	19.7	4	10542
Talladega	233.1	467.4	78.7	51.7	12.6	18	5.6	10790
Tallapoosa	276.7	452.4	72.6	44.5	12	17.4	5.8	9350
Alabama #	213.7	462.9	74.5	47.7	12.8	19.4	4.3	9508
United States	185**	494.3	49.8	69.9	11.6	19.2	2.5	5200
* http://www.adph.org/healthstats/index.asp?id=1521								
** http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/cancer.htm								
***Robert Wood Johnson Foundation countyhealthrankings.org								
# http://www.adph.org/ascr/assets/2014FactsFigures.pdf								

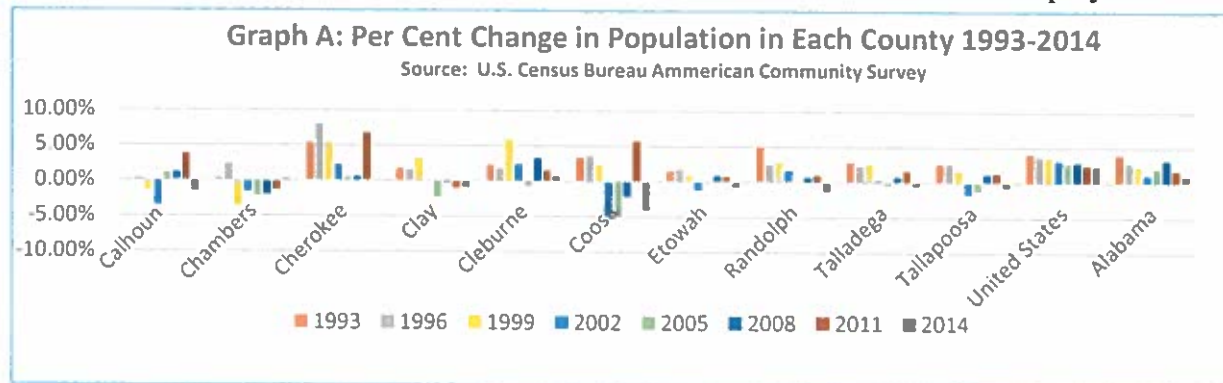
1.c. Financial Need

1.c.i. Economic Conditions: The southeastern part of the United States has historically ranked in the lowest economic tiers of the country. Alabama's poverty level ranks 45th out of 50 states plus the District of Columbia in the nation (per 2013 U.S. Census Bureau). The East Alabama region in particular, has suffered a series of negative impacts over the last 20 years that has left the region in an even more precarious economic state. In 1994 the North American free Trade Agreement was signed. Until this time, one of Calhoun County's core industries was textile manufacturing. Bustling mills dotted the landscape at every turn. But NAFTA resulted in a redistribution of labor-intensive manufacturing to less expensive off-shore locations. By 2007, Alabama has lost 60,800

jobs in this industry.¹ Abandoned mills now dot the landscape at every turn. Local economic development efforts stepped up to the task of diversifying the local economies.

However, in 1995 the Base Realignment and Closure Commission recommended the closure of Fort McClellan and by 1999 the installation was closed. McClellan is located in Calhoun County, an economic engine for most of the region's counties. A study by Jacksonville State University at the time estimated that 2,500 civilian jobs were lost (direct payroll of \$65,000,000) and 2,500 army training personnel and 3,100 military students also left the area (direct payroll of \$94,000,000). The impact of these losses to the community translates into a \$65,000,000 loss of revenue. It is also estimated that 12,000 jobs in the community were defense sector dependent. The region continued to pursue economic recovery over the next decade, but in 2008, the Great Depression knocked this effort back on its heels once again as the entire country suffered the consequences of the real estate market debacle. Then, in 2011, the last of World War II era chemical weapons at the Anniston Army Depot were incinerated, and the incineration facility, which employed 1,046 workers, was officially closed a year later. In 2012, the United States participation in the wars the Middle East came to the end. The Anniston Army Depot's main mission is military equipment repair. The community braced itself as the Army implemented its Reduction in Force program to coincide with the reduction in contract work on military equipment. From a peak of about 7,000 employees, the Depot today employs about 3,000 today. An economic strategic study performed in 2012, identified six counties in the Depot's labor shed; five of these counties are in the East Alabama region². A USA Today article analyzed US wages during 2012. In 2013, while most of the country was recovering from the Great Recession, the article listed the Anniston-Oxford metropolitan statistical area as experiencing **the largest decline in wages in the nation.**³

The effects of this series of economic misfortunes on the region can be seen in Graph A. Although the nation and the State of Alabama as a whole have experienced an increase in population between 1992 to the present, nine of the ten counties in the region have experienced periods of population decline as jobs have disappeared and families have had to move elsewhere for employment.



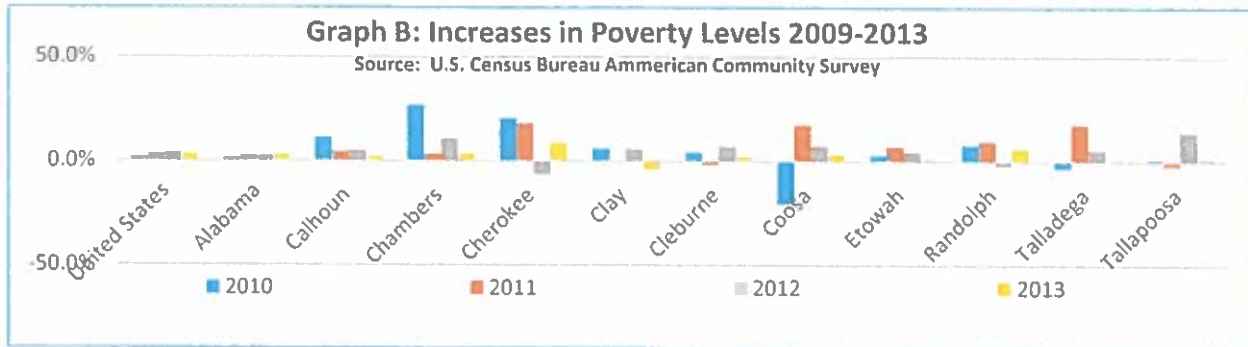
These declines in jobs and population have a negative impact on per capita income. In 1990, the region's average PCI stood at 69% of the nation's PCI. Although it experienced moderate rises at several points between then and now, today it still stagnates at 69% (U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey).

¹ Source: American Manufacturing Trade Action Coalition, June 2, 2007

² Workforce Retention & Economic Strategy | AUGUST 2012, TIP Strategies

³ Cities Where Wages Are Plummeting, USA Today by Samuel Weigley July 11, 2013

This negative impact can especially be seen in the increase in poverty rates for the region. Although the nation's poverty rates have risen 1.9% since 2009, most of the region's counties have experiences even greater increases during the same time period (Graph B).



Many of the region's cities, towns and counties have budgets that do not meet their communities' needs. Several are operating from deficit budgets. Aging infrastructure falls into disrepair as other pressing community needs take priority. Simply stated this is a poor region with no resources to address the brownfields issue.

1.c.ii: Economic Effects of Brownfields: From the demographics table on p. 2, one can see that the region's counties are small. Their incorporated communities range in size from 36,856 to under 1000 in population (2010 U.S. Census Bureau). Poverty rates are high, ranging from about 15-24%. Unemployment is presently and historically higher than in other parts of the state and the nation. All this adds to the difficulty of our small towns' and cities' abilities to maintain a proper tax base to adequately provide the infrastructure and services that larger cities provide.

The loss of the mills and other businesses that once were the mainstay of these rural areas, has resulted in a cascade of business failures and more abandoned properties. Brownfields in the region dot the landscape, whether it be an old gas station on the corner of 1st and Main, or several hundred acres covered with abandoned mill structures. A prime example is the oft-abandoned properties of old Main Street neighborhoods. No income is being produced on these properties, no taxes or jobs are being generated, and contamination may be affecting the environment. The blight introduced by an abandoned property dissuades other businesses from locating nearby, and generally depresses property values in the neighborhood. Unless money is spent to properly secure these sites, vacated properties become unsafe places which may attract children to explore and others to vandalize. What could be a vibrant central business district for businesses, shopping and entertainment, now becomes an undesirable drain on a town's economic vitality. There is little choice for many families but to go elsewhere to find jobs.

2. Project Description and Feasibility of Success

2.a.i. Project Description: The East Alabama Regional Planning Commission is requesting \$400,000 in assessment funding to provide support to the regions efforts to perform region (community)-wide hazardous substance and petroleum assessments on multiple brownfield sites within the regions jurisdiction. This project will provide the data essential to achieving the revitalization envisioned during the CLEAR Plan 2030, a region-wide sustainability planning process. The counties and municipalities within the region are united through other planning processes as well such as the CEDS for the East Alabama Region, Workforce Development Strategy and Coordinated Public Transit and Human Services Plan.

This project will begin by acquiring funding. Once funding is secured, the outreach phase of the project will immediately begin, while concurrently going through the process of securing professional services for phase 1 assessments. Once that professional service is brought on board, it will be expected that entity will join in the outreach campaign. The current identified sites will be the first to receive assessment, and while that is occurring other sites will be identified and the inventory expanded to line up sites for assessment. Environmental Justice towns such as Goodwater (Minority population 1,357/80.9%, poverty rate 31.4%), Hobson City (Minority population 702/86.5%, poverty rate 39.9%) and Camp Hill (Minority population 719/80.3%, poverty rate 26.7%) will be targeted and the brownfield funding availability strongly marketed toward properties in these jurisdictions. This will be an all-inclusive project, but these towns will be given special considerations.

Projected redevelopment for the currently identified sites (Section 1.a.iii) will promote economic development and green infrastructure. Existing industrial sites are targeted for economic development, and the abandoned retail/commercial site is targeted for redevelopment as a downtown pocket park.

2.a.ii. Project Timing: Key project activities are community outreach which would begin immediately and progress throughout the grant performance period. EARPDC staff, partners and environmental consulting professionals would carry out this task. Contractor procurement would be completed by EARPDC who would advertise an RFP, and utilize partners in reviewing and rating respondents to that RFP. The RFP process is expected to be completed approximately 4 months after award. As previously stated, there are 4 sites already identified for assessment. It is anticipated these sites would be assessed rather quickly as there is much interest in redevelopment of them. An ongoing item during the project would be the identification and inventory of additional sites. Site access would be the responsibility of the consulting professional and the community with assistance when needed from the EARPDC and partners.

2.a.iii. Site Selection: EARPDC, County, City and town officials will collaborate with local health departments, community organizations, and developers to identify projects and provide input and participation. The threshold ranking of projects in the regional inventory will include eligibility for funding, site access and potential for redevelopment. Utilizing local tools for site access and control will be a decision made at the local level unless there is evidence of imminent threat to human health and the environment. These sites will be referred to the proper authorities – Health Department and the Alabama Department of Environmental Management in order to immediately address violations and or releases.

2.b Task Description and Budget Table

2.b.i. Task Descriptions

Task A: Outreach/education: Although brownfield sites have been identified in many of our communities, efforts will be made to meet with community members to discover more details about the impacts these site are having on the welfare of the community, the feasibility of redevelopment, and the interest in cleanup and redevelopment. EARPDC is planning to conduct community outreach at all phases of the project. The outreach sessions will aid in selecting the sites for environmental assessment based on greatest impact on the community with respect to public health, safety, welfare as well as economic feasibility. These inputs will help to determine the best sites for assessment. The community outreach sessions will be carried out by EARPDC personnel

Task B: Phase I ESAs: between the two budgets, twenty sites (ten for hazardous substances and ten for petroleum contamination) will be chosen for Phase I ESAs at an estimated cost of \$3,000/site. These assessments will be carried out by contract personnel, with oversight by EARPDC staff.

Task C: Phase II ESA's: It is estimated that six of the ten hazardous substance sites and six of the petroleum sites will require further investigation via the Phase II ESAs. These also will be carried out by contract personnel, with oversight by EARPDC staff at an approximated cost of \$16,000 ea.

Task D: Programmatic Costs: These are costs incurred by tasks performed by EARPDC staff to carry out the project. They include consultant selection (ad, staff time), project planning and scheduling, reports, and training conferences.

Task E: Planning for Cleanup & Redevelopment: Once the results from the Assessments are complete, the EARPDC staff and the consultant will work with the communities to plan the next steps – finding partners to fund and implement the cleanup, and formulating the redevelopment plan.

2.b.ii. Budget Table: EARPDC intends to select ten sites for Hazardous Substance Phase I Environmental Site Assessments, and estimates that of those ten, six will require Phase II ESAs. In addition, ten additional sites for Petroleum Phase I ESRs will be selected, followed by 6 Phase II ESRs. The following two tables reflect the budgets designed to cover the costs of these two projects, including the costs allocated for planning the cleanup and redevelopment of these sites.

Project Tasks (programmatic costs only)						
	A	B	C	D	E	
Hazardous Sub- stance Budget	Outreach/ Education	Phase I ESAs	Phase II ESAs	Programmatic Costs	Planning for Cleanup & Redevelopment	Total
Personnel	\$3,120	\$2,080	\$1,560	\$7,594	\$8,320	\$22,674
Fringe Benefits	\$1,560	\$1,040	\$780	\$3,786	\$4,160	\$11,326
Travel	\$1,000			\$3,000	\$1,000	\$5,000
Supplies	\$1,500				\$1,500	\$3,000
Contractual		\$30,000	\$95,000	\$1,000	\$32,000	\$158,000
	\$7,180	\$33,120	\$97,340	\$15,380	\$46,980	\$200,000

	A	B	C	D	E	
Petroleum Budget	Outreach/ Education	Phase I ESAs	Phase II ESAs	Programmatic Costs	Planning for Cleanup & Redevelopment	Total
Personnel	\$3,120	\$2,080	\$1,560	\$7,594	\$8,320	\$22,674
Fringe Benefits	\$1,560	\$1,040	\$780	\$3,786	\$4,160	\$11,326
Travel	\$1,000			\$3,000	\$1,000	\$5,000
Supplies	\$1,500				\$1,500	\$3,000
Contractual		\$30,000	\$95,000	\$1,000	\$32,000	\$158,000
Total	\$7,180	\$33,120	\$97,340	\$15,380	\$46,980	\$200,000

2. c. Ability to leverage: EARPDC staff has access to annually awarded planning grants to cover personnel costs not covered by other programs. These fund sources are the Economic Development Administration, the Appalachian Regional Commission and the State of Alabama. These funds may be leveraged to ensure that adequate community outreach is effected even beyond the budget of this grant project and continues in the future to help to formulate an on-going and permanent brownfields program in the region.

EARPDC staff will also ensure that owners with contaminated sites are aware of various programs that can facilitate cleanup in various ways. The Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) offers a Voluntary Cleanup Program, the Drycleaner Environmental Remediation Trust Fund Program, and the Underground Storage Tank Program to aid in environmental remediation efforts. Utilization of ADEM programs will leverage technical assistance, and oversight. Utilizing ADEM oversight can provide future liability protection for prospective purchasers, thereby making development one step easier.

Staff will also educate site owners on the mechanisms that are available for minimizing liability in cleanup costs and environmental liability. There may also be local, state and federal tax incentives to offset clean-up costs.

EARPDC also operates a Revolving Loan Fund which can be used to leverage private funding for the properties that have been assessed, cleaned if needed, and are ready for redevelopment. The fund currently manages a portfolio of over \$3 million that is available to qualifying small businesses across the region.

3. Community Engagement and Partnerships

3.a.i. Community Involvement Plan: The East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission received a HUD Sustainable Communities Planning Grant in FY2010. The success of that project depended on a robust community engagement process. Initially, a community outreach plan was developed, and implemented. Components of the plan included County Conversations in which staff and consortium members took planning, information gathering and listening sessions to the residents of each county within the region. Outreach was also conducted at Senior Citizens Centers and Housing Authorities throughout the region. A survey instrument was developed for the purpose of gauging readiness to embrace sustainable development, and gather information regarding sustainable concepts residents were in favor of. The survey was made available online through Survey Monkey, as well as printed copies distributed to libraries, public schools throughout the region, and businesses that would allow distribution. Two County Conversations were held in each county, and the capstone conversation was held in Anniston (Calhoun County) and both streamed live over the internet and broadcast live on television. Through the County Conversations direct contact was made with over 2,000 residents within the region, and the survey captured input from over 5,400 residents.

This model was so successful that it will be repeated for this project, with outreach to local governments, residents, civic groups, schools and businesses. The outreach will be conducted by local elected leaders, partners of this project, staff and a consultant to be selected to complete phase 1 and phase 2 assessments.

3.a.ii. Communicating Progress: Communication regarding the progress of the project will be made electronically via the EARPDCs Facebook page and website. Press releases will be issued to Consolidated Publishing and Boone Newspapers, Inc. Between these two entities, all ten counties have representation. Jacksonville State University's Communication and Journalism School

will be invited to cover outreach events. Local television talk shows will be contacted for “spots” on shows to provide updates on the projects progress as was done in the development of the sustainable communities planning project. Fact sheets, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and project brochures will be developed in both English and Spanish for distribution.

3.b.i Partnerships with Government Agencies: The Alabama Land Recycling and Economic Redevelopment Act signed into law May 21, 2001, created a state voluntary cleanup program. The Alabama Department of Environmental Management is the state agency that administers this program for redevelopment of brownfield sites. The Act allows for the assessment and remediation of contaminated sites and grants certain liability protection, including protection from third party lawsuits, to those non-responsible entities wishing to redevelop brownfields sites. The liability protections are fully transferable to any non-responsible party who may purchase the site provided all land use controls are adequately maintained.

3.b.ii. Other Governmental Partnerships: The East Alabama region covers 10 counties and 57 municipalities. Most of these entities are members communities of EARPDC, and as such, serve on the Board of Directors. As Board members these communities are kept well-informed of the Commission’s activities, and participate in the many programs we offer, either directly as a local government or indirectly, through their citizens. We have partnered with these groups in the past on grants, programs, community visioning and planning, charrettes, etc. and will continue to do so throughout the brownfields projects.

3.c. Partnerships with Community Organizations

3.c.i. Community Organization Description: In addition, the Commission staff has close ties with businesses, the Chambers of Commerce and the economic development councils (EDCs), through grant programs, the Revolving Loan Fund Program, and the local Workforce Development Council (WFD). The Chambers and the EDC’s will be essential partners in identifying and contacting property owners and espousing the benefits of the brownfields programs. The WFD Council (a forum that partners the community colleges and local businesses) will be an excellent venue to address training issues.

In addition to the economic development partnerships, we also partner with community organizations specializing in health, housing and other various community issues. The Sylacauga Alliance for Family Enhancement (SAFE) has been a longtime partner of the East Alabama Regional Planning and Developments’ Area Agency on Aging. SAFE served as a consortium member and housing livability resource team member during the development of the CLEAR Plan 2030, a HUD funded sustainable communities planning project. SAFE is a community based non-profit organization whose purpose is to provide meaningful opportunities for families, to contribute to the growth of the community and to serve others and to promote community cohesion. The East Alabama Planning Commission has also partnered with the West Anniston Foundation in the past, and will reach out to them again for this project. The West Anniston Foundation is a public charity that focuses on providing educational, developmental and health resources that create a sustainable community.

3.c.ii. Letters of Commitment: These letters may be found in **Appendix 2**

4. Project Benefits

4.a.i. Health and or Welfare Benefits: Assessing these properties not only determines the impacts of any potential contaminants but makes our communities more attractive and economically

stronger. The Region is already seeing benefits from the sustainable communities planning project, which was also a catalyst for this project.

Potential hazardous substance and petroleum contamination on brownfield sites in our region may directly impact the public health of residents in our targeted areas, especially our most susceptible population – children and the aged. This grant will allow communities in the region to begin assessing properties, identifying those risks, the potential exposure pathways and take steps to remediate or mitigate risks posed.

Site inventory and characterization through Phase I & II assessments funded by this grant will be used to determine health risks and to take affirmative action recommended by the Alabama Department of Environmental Management and contracted Environmental Consultants to reduce the risks in the East Alabama planning region. A significant portion of anticipated benefits of redevelopment include reduction of community risk of exposure to these brownfield sites, including: securing them so they can no longer pose an attractive nuisance to the children of the areas, containing contaminants on site and checking the stormwater routes to ensure water is not moving uncontrolled off sites. Inventory and site selection will identify high risk brownfields, which will be addressed first. Assessment of individual brownfields will provide more comprehensive knowledge of the specific contaminants to be dealt with and allow for planning for and addressing remediation in safe and effective ways.

4.a.ii. Environmental Benefits: Very simply stated, the environmental benefit is assessing and finally knowing whether or not sites contain contaminants. Confirming that the brownfield sites do not contain contaminants will be welcome news to local leaders and the residents near these sites. Developers will be eager to move forward planning the reuse of the properties. By having the properties assessed and given a clean bill of health, the sites can then be aggressively marketed for redevelopment with new “green” technologies such as ecofriendly landscaping to absorb rainwater thereby reducing stormwater runoff and improve erosion control. Properties targeted for redevelopment into greenspace (such as the one identified in section 1.a.iii for a downtown pocket park) will not only provide outdoor recreation space for people, but also a micro habitat for birds, urban animals and insects.

Where the real benefit comes in play, and this seems ironic, is where contamination is confirmed and identified. Contaminated property can then be properly secured, cleanup plans developed and a strategy created to remove identified toxins from the community. Reuse of sites which have previously disturbed land for development will preserve the rural character of our communities without a need for devouring existing undisturbed land for consumer, commercial or industrial needs.

4.b. Environmental benefits from Infrastructure reuse/Sustainable reuse: It is essential that reuse initiatives in rural areas and small towns consider the unique character of the area and are sustainable culturally as well as environmentally. Often the most successful programs have a grass-roots approach. The benefits from reuse of the identified properties will allow cities, towns and communities to maintain their individualism, while curbing unnecessary economic sprawl. Preliminary information obtained from the East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission CLEAR Plan 2030 project indicates that citizens of the region are facing unsustainable costs of living regarding housing and transportation. Redevelopment of existing sites will restore economic viability to various communities and towns, lowering transportation costs to residents. Also, reuse of properties which already have access to water, electricity and sewer/wastewater

disposal will eliminate the need for expanding services to currently unserved areas and therefore, additional strains on resources such as fossil fuels and water. The reuse of brownfield sites will help preserve existing greenspace, and community character.

Environmental and social benefits in the various comprehensive plans throughout the region, hazard mitigation plans, transportation and economic development plans include reuse of existing infrastructure such as utilities and public transit, reduction of development pressure on surrounding greenfields, prevention of sprawl, improved air quality, and reduction of natural habitat destruction. Many brownfield assessments conducted in other areas on perceived contaminated properties reveal that no cleanup is necessary and that the site is ready for development. Should this be true in this case, it will be beneficial for the tax revenue to the municipalities in the East Alabama Planning region and reduce the economic strain felt by developers. Overall, brownfield redevelopment will improve the health of the local communities, who have been living with toxins and blight.

4.b.i. Policies, Planning and Other Tools: Unfortunately, Alabama is not a “planning” state. Municipalities may develop comprehensive plans if they choose to do so, as can counties. Counties are however, prohibited from exercising land use controls or developing zoning. The most aggressive tool the state has in its arsenal for policies and planning is the forward thinking local leader – which the region is blessed to have many. Local elected officials have seen the decline of their towns’ economies through the mid-2000’s. They have seen buildings fall into disrepair and economies literally break and residents flee to more stable environments. So, if nothing else was learned locally from the economic downturn, the need for stable, diverse economies and compact, reduced sprawl which stresses existing infrastructure should become paramount for all communities.

4.b.ii. Integrating Equitable Development or Livability Principles: This project is in alignment with livability principles identified in the Community Livability for the East Alabama Region Plan 2030 as it will foster reuse of existing infrastructure through infill development. We plan to foster mixed use development in downtowns where appropriate to promote vibrant communities. Creating commercial and industrial locations in central portions of our communities and near major transportation corridors will also encourage alternative modes of transportation such as walking or biking, which will reduce auto pollution.

And primarily, the assessment and confirmation of these properties are either safe to be prepared for reuse, or should be assessed further will allow developer to proceed with plans or look for alternate sites should the properties be deemed unavailable due to contamination.

5. Programmatic Capability and Past Performance

5.a. Programmatic Capability: The East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission (EARPDC) is a multi-purpose public agency providing a wide range of services to member governments within the ten-county service area and to the residents of the region. The Commission is designated to provide regional services by a number of state and federal agencies. The Commission is the Economic Development Administration (EDA) designated Economic Development District (EDD) and the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) designated Local Development District (LDD) for its region. The Commission provides program administrative support to the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Calhoun Area Transportation Study. The Commission serves as the Rural Planning Organization (RPO) providing transportation planning support for the non-urbanized areas of the region under a contract with the Alabama Department of Transportation. The Commission has also developed a Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan for the region.

The Commission provides a wide range of general planning services to its member governments. Typical planning assistance services include: preparing local government comprehensive plans, zoning ordinances, and subdivision regulations; responding to general planning and zoning questions; conducting local strategic planning forums; preparing housing needs assessments, neighborhood improvement plans and downtown revitalization plans. The Commission maintains demographic and socio-economic data on the local governments, serves as a State Data Center repository, and prepares and updates annually the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The Commission's staff also provides technical assistance on redistricting, and emergency preparedness plans. The Commission provides a broad range of mapping and Geographic Information System (GIS) services. The Commission's staff also provides technical assistance to local governments in preparation and submission of grant applications and the management of grants. In 1988, the Commission created the first Regional Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) in Alabama.

Although the staff has traditionally worked CDBG, EDA and ARC grants. In the last few years we have taken on some non-traditional programs from other agencies, including the Office of Economic Adjustment (DoD), the Department of Energy, the Federal Railroad Administration, the National Telecommunication Information Administration. Perhaps the most significant was the 3-year CLEAR Plan 2030, which has become the basis of many of the programs the Commission is presently pursuing, such as the Brownfields Assessment grant.

All of these activities have required a professional, well-trained and educated staff to oversee both the programmatic and fiscal responsibilities of each of these programs. Two Principal Planners will manage this program. Donna Fathke, (Masters of Urban Planning) has been with the Commission for 20 years, focusing primarily on economic development aspects of the planning process, including grant writing and management, and management of the Revolving Loan Fund. Robin Caler (Masters of Public Administration) has been at the Commission for 15 years. Ms. Caler has focused primarily on Community Development grants and Disaster Planning. She was instrumental in the implementation and culminating final report of CLEAR Plan 2030. Both Ms. Caler and Ms. Fathke have in-depth experience with the qualification process for awarding contracts to consultants and contractors, as many of their projects over the years have required engineers, architects, and community and economic consultants; both have gained valuable experience in the oversight process working with these contractors through the implementation phases of numerous projects. Both have had extensive experience with community outreach in both small and large venues, in holding public hearings, and hosting community gatherings, and meeting with public officials, and economic development professionals.

5.b. Audit Findings: In the latest audit (2014), one condition was listed as a finding:

"The Commission requested an advancement of grant funds for future payroll. Per the grant agreement, advances of up to 90 days may be requested for operational support. When grant payments are cash advances, the amount requested will be limited to that actually required. Any grant funds actually advanced and not needed for grant purposes shall be returned immediately to the Grant. The advancement of payroll was not completely used within the 90 days required and was not returned to the Grantor."

The Commission's response: The Commission placed into effect a spreadsheet system to track the use of advances to ensure that the 90 day requirements were met.

5.c. Past Performance and Accomplishments

Appendix 3 Regional Priorities Form/Other Factors Checklist

Name of Applicant: East Alabama Regional Planning & Development Commission

Regional Priorities Other Factor

If your proposed Brownfields Assessment project will advance the regional priority(ies) identified in Section I.E, please indicate the regional priority(ies) and the page number(s) for where the information can be found within your 15-page narrative. Only address the priority(ies) for the region in which your project is located. EPA will verify these disclosures prior to selection and may consider this information during the selection process. If this information is not clearly discussed in your narrative proposal, it will not be considered during the selection process.

Regional Priority Title(s):

Assistance to communities that have limited in-house capacity
to manage brownfields projects

Page Number(s): page 1, section 1.a.1

Assessment Other Factors Checklist

Please identify (with an **X**) which, if any of the below items apply to your community or your project as described in your proposal. To be considered for an Other Factor, you must include the page number where each applicable factor is discussed in your proposal. EPA will verify these disclosures prior to selection and may consider this information during the selection process. If this information is not clearly discussed in your narrative proposal or in any other attachments, it will not be considered during the selection process.

Other Factor	Page #
<i>None of the Other Factors are applicable.</i>	
Community population is 10,000 or less.	
Applicant is, or will assist, a federally recognized Indian tribe or United States territory.	
Targeted brownfield sites are impacted by mine-scarred land.	
Project is primarily focusing on Phase II assessments.	
Applicant demonstrates firm leveraging commitments for facilitating brownfield project completion by identifying amounts and contributors of funding in the proposal and have included documentation.	
Recent (2008 or later) significant economic disruption has occurred within community, resulting in a significant percentage loss of community jobs and tax base.	
Applicant is one of the 24 recipients, or a core partner/implementation strategy	

party, of a “manufacturing community” designation provided by the Economic Development Administration (EDA) under the Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership (IMCP). To be considered, applicants must clearly demonstrate in the proposal the nexus between their IMCP designation and the Brownfield activities. Additionally, applicants must attach documentation which demonstrate either designation as one of the 24 recipients, or relevant pages from a recipient’s IMCP proposal which lists/describes the core partners and implementation strategy parties.	
Applicant is a recipient or a core partner of HUD-DOT-EPA Partnership for Sustainable Communities (PSC) grant funding or technical assistance that is directly tied to the proposed Brownfields project, and can demonstrate that funding from a PSC grant/technical assistance has or will benefit the project area. Examples of PSC grant or technical assistance include a HUD Regional Planning or Challenge grant, DOT Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER), or EPA Smart Growth Implementation or Building Blocks Assistance, etc. To be considered, applicant must attach documentation.	see incl. letter
Applicant is a recipient of an EPA Brownfields Area-Wide Planning grant.	

Application for Federal Assistance SF-424

* 1. Type of Submission:

- ☐ Preapplication
☒ Application
☐ Changed/Corrected Application

* 2. Type of Application:

- ☒ New
☐ Continuation
☐ Revision

* If Revision, select appropriate letter(s):

* Other (Specify):

* 3. Date Received:

12/17/2015

4. Applicant Identifier:

5a. Federal Entity Identifier:

5b. Federal Award Identifier:

State Use Only:

6. Date Received by State:

7. State Application Identifier:

8. APPLICANT INFORMATION:

* a. Legal Name:

East Alabama Regional Planning & Development Commission

* b. Employer/Taxpayer Identification Number (EIN/TIN):

63-0567855

* c. Organizational DUNS:

0944848880000

d. Address:

* Street1:

P.O. Box 2186

Street2:

* City:

Anniston

County/Parish:

* State:

AL: Alabama

Province:

* Country:

USA: UNITED STATES

* Zip / Postal Code:

36202-2186

e. Organizational Unit:

Department Name:

Division Name:

f. Name and contact information of person to be contacted on matters involving this application:

Prefix:

* First Name:

Donna

Middle Name:

* Last Name:

Fathke

Suffix:

Title:

Principal Planner

Organizational Affiliation:

* Telephone Number:

256-237-6741

Fax Number:

256-237-6763

* Email:

donna.fathke@earpdc.org

Application for Federal Assistance SF-424

* 9. Type of Applicant 1: Select Applicant Type:

E: Regional Organization

Type of Applicant 2: Select Applicant Type:

Type of Applicant 3: Select Applicant Type:

* Other (specify):

* 10. Name of Federal Agency:

Environmental Protection Agency

11. Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number:

66.818

CFDA Title:

Brownfields Assessment and Cleanup Cooperative Agreements

* 12. Funding Opportunity Number:

EPA-OSWER-OBLR-15-04

* Title:

FY16 Guidelines for Brownfields Assessment Grants

13. Competition Identification Number:

Title:

14. Areas Affected by Project (Cities, Counties, States, etc.):

Add Attachment

Delete Attachment

View Attachment

* 15. Descriptive Title of Applicant's Project:

East Alabama Region Brownfields Assessment

Attach supporting documents as specified in agency instructions.

Add Attachments

Delete Attachments

View Attachments

Application for Federal Assistance SF-424**16. Congressional Districts Of:*** a. Applicant * b. Program/Project

Attach an additional list of Program/Project Congressional Districts if needed.

Add Attachment

Delete Attachment

View Attachment

17. Proposed Project:* a. Start Date: * b. End Date: **18. Estimated Funding (\$):**

* a. Federal	<input type="text" value="400,000.00"/>
* b. Applicant	<input type="text" value="0.00"/>
* c. State	<input type="text" value="0.00"/>
* d. Local	<input type="text" value="0.00"/>
* e. Other	<input type="text" value="0.00"/>
* f. Program Income	<input type="text" value="0.00"/>
* g. TOTAL	<input type="text" value="400,000.00"/>

*** 19. Is Application Subject to Review By State Under Executive Order 12372 Process?**

- ☐ a. This application was made available to the State under the Executive Order 12372 Process for review on .
- ☐ b. Program is subject to E.O. 12372 but has not been selected by the State for review.
- ☒ c. Program is not covered by E.O. 12372.

*** 20. Is the Applicant Delinquent On Any Federal Debt? (If "Yes," provide explanation in attachment.)**☐ Yes ☒ No

If "Yes", provide explanation and attach

Add Attachment

Delete Attachment

View Attachment

21. *By signing this application, I certify (1) to the statements contained in the list of certifications and (2) that the statements herein are true, complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I also provide the required assurances** and agree to comply with any resulting terms if I accept an award. I am aware that any false, fictitious, or fraudulent statements or claims may subject me to criminal, civil, or administrative penalties. (U.S. Code, Title 218, Section 1001)**

☒ ** I AGREE

** The list of certifications and assurances, or an internet site where you may obtain this list, is contained in the announcement or agency specific instructions.

Authorized Representative:

Prefix: * First Name:

Middle Name:

* Last Name:

Suffix:

* Title: * Telephone Number: Fax Number: * Email: * Signature of Authorized Representative: * Date Signed: